

Howland Wood - Curatorial

The Society of Medallists
[30 Rockefeller Plaza]

1934-1937

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

HEADQUARTERS / ART CENTER

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

GEORGE D. PRATT, *Founder*
ALEXANDER B. TROWBRIDGE
FREDERICK A. WHITING

~~65 East 56th Street~~

New York 30 Rockefeller Plaza

ADVISORY BOARD

HERBERT ADAMS
JAMES E. FRASER
PAUL MANSHIP
HERMON A. MACNEIL
FREDERICK W. MACMONNIES

November 23, 1934.

Mr. Howland Wood, Curator,
American Numismatic Society,
Broadway bet. 155th & 156th Sts.,
New York, New York.

Dear Mr. Wood:

We have received a request for some information about the history of medals and find that there is some of it we cannot answer. We would be very appreciative of any information you could give us on where we might obtain this information or if you could answer them we will be grateful.

The following questions are the ones we cannot answer.

"Who was the English queen who first made the bestowal of medals a real distinction and what event was she recognizing?"

"Who is Roi Partridge?"

California either su Who's Who

We are enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your convenience in answering these questions.

Very sincerely yours,

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

H. G. Day
Secretary.

November 26, 1934.

The Society of Medalists
30 Rockefeller Place
New York City.

Gentlemen: Attention: W. G. Day, Secretary

In reply to your question as to who was the English king who first made the bestowal of medals a real distinction, we cannot say with absolute certainty but we can find nothing that would come under the sense of a reward or an award before the time of Elizabeth. Probably the first of these were about 1588 and were known as naval reward medals. They come in silver and gold and sometimes have enamelled backgrounds. Most of them show Elizabeth on one side and an ark on waves on the other; sometimes a tree growing out of a mountain. They are ringed to be worn about the neck. They are extremely rare pieces and imitations have been made. Roy Partridge was a California etcher. You can find out all about him in Who's Who.

Very truly yours,

HW:JG

Curator

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

GEORGE D. PRATT, FOUNDER

119 EAST 19TH STREET, NEW YORK

National Arts Club Building

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FREDERICK W. MacMONNIES

March 18, 1937.

Dear Friend:

Many former members of the Society of Medalists have voluntarily renewed their membership since January first.

You may want to do likewise.

The enclosed application blank will inform you of the issues since you resigned.

The first issue for this year to be sent to members about May first was designed by Robert I. Aitken.

You can begin with the current year, or renew for as many back years as you wish.

The Society sincerely hopes you will appreciate and act favorably upon this invitation to rejoin the fine art patrons of America who are exclusively enjoying the medallic masterpieces of foremost American sculptors.

Very sincerely yours,

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

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EXEMPLARS OF CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURAL ART



HAT a fundamental truth Emerson expressed in the words, "Beauty is its own excuse for being". How aptly does this truth apply when the subject is the thoughtful creation of a great artist who has given of his best to express his ideals for his own and for future generations.

Among the many forms of artistic expression, perhaps none has an appeal so intimate and individual as the medal. From the early days of numismatic art, medals have possessed a peculiar quality of preeminence among connoisseurs of sculptural beauty. To possess several examples of medallic art, the work of great sculptors, has been within the reach of but few individuals until quite recently.



BEAUTIFUL IMPERISHABLE BRONZE MASTERPIECES

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS was organized to increase appreciation of this field of art and to make possible, to a wider circle of art lovers, the possession of medals representative of the authentic expression of America's great sculptors.

Each year the Society issues to its members two medals, the work of two of our foremost sculptors. The Committee on Selection commissions these artists each to create a medal expressing some ideal worthy of perpetuation in thought and execution. No other restrictions limit the sculptors. This plan makes possible the highest type of artistic achievement—not circumscribed by convention, criticism or compromise. Among the sculptors who have designed medals for the Society are Laura Gardin Fraser, Paul Manship, Hermon A. MacNeil, Frederick MacMonnies, Lee Lawrie, John Flanagan, Carl Paul Jennewein, Gaetano Cecere, Herbert Adams, Albert Laessle, Larado Taft, Anthony de Francisci. Sculptors whose names carry such significant recognition naturally create medals of superior artistic merit.

Since its organization, members of the Society of Medalists have regularly received the two medals annually. Several of these have been reproduced in this folder. The illustrations convey but a meager impression of the beauty and desirability of the



THE WORK OF AMERICA'S GREAT SCULPTORS

medals themselves. Held in the hand, the sense of feeling is delighted by their satiny surface, while every appreciative faculty is quickened by their beauty of conception, of execution and patina. Seldom can one obtain so exquisite an example of art, encompassed in a mere handful of metal, produced by the creative genius of our leading contemporary sculptors.

The issues to date constitute a distinctive collection of which the members are, and well may be, proud. Their intrinsic worth is appreciable and this value will increase with the years and as the collection grows.

The medals are all of imperishable bronze and the passing of time only enriches their patina and beauty. They will become worthy heirlooms for future possessors.

These medals are not sold by art dealers or galleries. They are in the possession only of members of the Society of Medalists—exclusively their art treasures, obtainable only through membership.

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

~~30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK~~

119 EAST 19TH STREET, NEW YORK



THE ART OF TODAY—THE HEIRLOOMS OF TOMORROW

APPRECIATION

It is a great delight to receive these medals which offer such a splendid variety of expression in this art. Each time the medal comes, I think that it could not be better; then, along comes another one which keeps up the high standard. I am proud to be a member of the Society.

ROYAL B. FARNUM, Providence, Rhode Island
Educational Director, Rhode Island School of Design

In compliance with your suggestion I am sending you my subscription for three years—\$24.00 enclosed. For this treble fee I understand I am entitled to receive all the medals issued for the years 1930, 1931 and 1932. I should have told you that I was introduced to your Society by Judge John M. Woolsey, 131 East 66th Street, New York City, who is a member and who showed me, with great pride, five of the medals which you have issued. I think they are all fine medals, one or two of them quite extraordinary. I am glad to be enrolled as a member of such an excellent Society.

MR. JOHN ANGEL, Sculptor, New York City

On the whole I think the series of medals you have so far issued is glorious. They are as we often say, quite unique. I know of nothing like them in the whole field of numismatics. Their colors are remarkable. The medals you send me I always place in the Numismatic Collection of Yale University.

WILLIAM H. OWEN, New York City
Associate Curator of Coins, Yale University Library

As one who loves, and has at least some little appreciation of artistic productions, design, craftsmanship, and especially of the achievements and life of the sportsman, my congratulations and commendations to you and the artists who have produced the splendid series of medals issued under your inspiring and careful supervision.

GUSTAVUS TOWN KIRBY, Attorney, New York City

I find increasing pleasure in the medals issued by the Society of Medalists. To me the medallic art should receive every encouragement, as it seems to foster the finer spirit of art and is an expression essentially adapted to our modern life.

MISS JEAN DEAN COLE, Washington, D.C.
President, Mount Vernon Seminary

The new medal is very beautiful and I am pleased to have it. You are keeping the standard of medals to a very high degree.

J. J. HAVERTY, Atlanta, Georgia
President, Haverty Furniture Companies, Inc.

All the issues of the Society I have found very interesting, because of the great variety of subject and outstanding difference in treatment of each one. It is most stimulating to me to observe the wide divergence of conception and technique shown in the group thus far.

JOHN R. SINNOCK, Philadelphia, Pa.
Chief Engraver, United States Mint

Aside from the 12 issues from the Society of Medalists I have a modest collection of other issues, mostly French and American. Once a year I set up a special exhibition for my students in art appreciation. These classes run from 50 to 75 members, senior and graduate students, rather mature and apt to appreciate. These medals give them the opportunity to see and handle (the handling is important) first hand, authentic work of living American sculptors, and to compare these with other work by other men elsewhere. It is possible to make out of this a comparative, intensive study, and it is pleasant to report that these students are always enthusiastic about the exercise. I feel sure that these materials could be widely used in all sorts of schools for purposes of art instruction.

FRANK A. WAUGH, Amherst, Mass.
Art Teacher, Massachusetts State College

The 10th issue of your Society has been received here. And I write to congratulate you upon this work which I consider a fine one and which we are glad to add to the permanent collection of the Gallery.

C. POWELL MINNIGERODE, Director
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

I find upon my return to the office, the last issue of the Society's medal, and I wish to express my appreciation of this fine work of art, and also to say that I believe this is one of the finest ones I have seen. It is with great pleasure that I exhibit this to my friends who call at our home.

MORGAN P. UNDERWOOD, Chicago, Illinois
Investment Banker

May 17, 1937

Society of Medalists,
119 E. 19th St.,
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

We would like to make application for membership in the Society of Medalists. At the time it was founded we thought we were members but the person making application understood he was making it for himself and not for us. We, however, have a few of the past medals issued.

Would it be possible for us to get certain ones without subscribing for the two issued in the same year? We lack 1931, the one by MacMonnies; 1932, the one by John Flanagan; 1933, the one by Cecere; 1934 we desire both; 1935 we lack the one by Taft; 1936 we lack both.

Concerning the one by Jennewein, we think we have this. It has a cherub on one side and the word GLORIA and a fly on the other side.

If it is possible for us to get the individual ones for 1931, 33 and 35, will you let us know. The years 1934 and 36 you can send us. On receipt of your answer with the bill, we will have a check sent you.

Very truly yours,

Curator

HW ks
encl.

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

GEORGE D. PRATT, FOUNDER

~~30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK~~

119 EAST 19TH STREET, NEW YORK

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HERMON A. MACNEIL

FREDERICK W. MACMONNIES

June 8, 1937

Mr. Howland Wood, Curator
The American Numismatic Society
Broadway between 155th & 156th Streets
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Wood:

The principals directing the activities of the Society have seen your letter of May 17th and, naturally, are very pleased to know that you are becoming a supporting member.

We are only sorry that we cannot afford to present these issues to your Society but we work on a very close margin as you know.

Accordingly we are having delivered to you the medals by Frederick MacMonnies, John Flanagan, Gaetano Cecere, Herbert Adams, Albert Laessle, Lorado Taft, R. Tait McKenzie, Albert Stewart and the first 1937 issue by Robert Aitken.

We attach statement for \$40. which includes the two issues for 1937, the second of which will go to you in the fall.

Ordinarily we don't break the issues of any year but certainly you are entitled to special consideration.

Very sincerely yours,

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

O. F. Harrison

Secretary.

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June 3, 1937

Society of Medalists,
119 East 19th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

Your favor of June 8th at hand. As yet the medals you say were being delivered have not arrived. We had been holding up the payment of the bill but we have now directed the bank to send you a check for \$40.00, which you should receive toward the end of next week.

Trusting to receive the medals shortly and thanking you for allowing us to have certain medals for half years, I beg to remain,

Very truly yours,

Curator

HW ks

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HERMON A. MacNEIL

FREDERICK W. MacMONNIES

July 1, 1937

Mr. Howland Wood, Curator
The American Numismatic Society
Broadway between 155th and 156th Streets
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Wood:

Thank you for your letter of June 30th.
We had assumed that the medals called for in your
letter of May 17th had already been delivered to
you.

I have just made investigation and find
it will be impossible to get the medals to you un-
til Thursday or Friday or next week. Sorry for this
delay.

Very sincerely yours,

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

O. F. Harrison

Secretary

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July 8, 1937

Society of Medalists,
119 East 19th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

We beg to acknowledge receipt of the package
of medals we ordered and are very much pleased with them.

Very truly yours,

Curator

HW ks

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

GEORGE D. PRATT, FOUNDER

119 EAST 19TH STREET, NEW YORK

National Arts Club Building

ADVISORY BOARD

HERBERT ADAMS

JAMES E. FRASER

PAUL MANSHIP

HERMON A. MacNEIL

FREDERICK W. MacMONNIES

October 6, 1937.

Dear Member:

The Society is greatly encouraged by the recent increase in membership. Several former members have returned, most of them subscribing to all the medals issued since their resignation.

Many new members have joined by recommendation of those older members who take a sincere and active interest in the Society's work.

No medal issued by the Society has been praised more highly than the first issue of 1937, by Robert Aitken. The second issue for 1937, to be sent you about November 1st, will be reproduced from models by Chester Beach, N. A., New York City sculptor.

We predict that Chester Beach's medal will be highly valued, not only because it is an excellent example of this artist's ability, but because it delivers a powerful and much needed message at this time.

Please write us whenever you wish information about American sculptors and their works. We wish you to enjoy every advantage of your membership.

Very sincerely yours,

THE SOCIETY OF MEDALISTS

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